

Remarks

The Applicants have amended Claims 5, 6, 8, 9, 10 and 11 to place them in accordance with each other with respect to the peelable thermoplastic film layer. Claim 1 has further been amended to recite that the plate material has a peel strength of 0.5-20 g/cm. Support for this amendment may be found in the second and third full paragraphs of page 30 of the Applicants' Specification.

The Applicants acknowledge the 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph rejection of Claims 1-2 and 4-11 with respect to the "peelable" thermoplastic film layer. The Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's helpful comments concerning the specifics of the thermoplastic film layer and the helpful reference to page 30. However, the Applicants respectfully submit that page 30 of the Applicants' Specification does not teach a way from the film layer being peelable. The Applicants respectfully submit that the clear meaning of the discussion on page 30, taken with the paragraphs spanning pages 29 and 30, means that a photosensitive resin printing plate material can be obtained by utilizing a number of layers such that the optical density changing layer/peelable thermoplastic film layer combination may be peeled away from the photosensitive layer/support layer combination. Page 30 specifically states that a film stripping layer may be employed between the photosensitive layer and the film layer to "facilitate" peeling off the film layer from the photosensitive resin layer. Moreover, that portion of the Specification recites that the film stripping layer "may be provided" to achieve that task. This clearly implies that it is not necessary for the film stripping layer to be present to achieve the peeling off of the film layer from the photosensitive resin layer as specifically stated. In other words, no film stripping layer is required for peeling. The film stripping layer can facilitate such peeling if desired. It is desirable to have a peel strength of the photosensitive resin printing plate material from 0.5 to 20 g/cm.

In any event, the Applicants' Specification teaches those of ordinary skill in the art that the thermoplastic film layer is, in fact, peelable. It is highly desirable that the thermoplastic film layer be peelable. That is an important aspect of the invention. Reference to Example 1 of the Applicants' Specification clearly reveals this. Example 1 specifically states that an optical density changing layer composition 1 was applied to a film layer 1 which is a PET layer. Then, a photosensitive resin composition 1 was spread on a support. The optical density changing layer/film layer combination and the photosensitive resin composition layer/support combination were pressure adhered by using roller pressure adhesion.

Then, as noted near the bottom of 42 of the Applicants' Specification, the film layer and the optical density changing layer were "peeled off" manually from the photosensitive layer. This means without a doubt that the thermoplastic film layer is, in fact, "peelable." Those of ordinary skill in the art, based on this disclosure as recited in Example 1, taken with the remaining examples and the descriptive portion of the Specification, realize that thermoplastic film layers made from polyethylene, polypropylene, polyethylene terephthalate and polybutylene terephthalate, for example, should be selected so that they may, in fact, be peeled from the photosensitive layer. Of course, a film stripping layer may be employed between the thermoplastic film layer and the photosensitive layer to facilitate such peeling, if desired. Nonetheless, the thermoplastic film layer is peelable. One of ordinary skill in the art can readily glean this with no experimentation, much else undue experimentation, simply by reading the Applicants' Specification especially when taken in the context of the Examples. The Applicants therefore respectfully request that the 35 U.S.C. §112 rejection of Claims 1-2 and 4-11 be withdrawn.

The Applicants acknowledge the 35 U.S.C. §102 rejection of Claims 1-2, 4-5 and 7 as being anticipated by Fan with Sonia and Solms. The Applicants respectfully submit that all three references are inapplicable inasmuch as they fail to disclose, either explicitly or implicitly, the claimed aspect of the invention wherein the plate material has a peel strength of 0.5-20 g/cm. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that all of Fan, Sonia and Solms are inapplicable to Claims 1-2, 4-5 and 7. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §102 rejection is respectfully requested.

The Applicants acknowledge the rejection of Claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103 over the hypothetical combination of Kempf with all of Fan, Sonia and Solms. The Applicants respectfully submit that hypothetically combining Kempf with the primary references fails to cure the deficiency set forth above with respect to those primary references. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that the hypothetical combination still fails to teach or suggest the claimed aspect of the invention wherein the plate material has a peel strength of 0.5-20 g/cm. Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C. §103 rejection is respectfully requested.

In light of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that the entire Application is now in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



T. Daniel Christenbury
Reg. No. 31,750
Attorney for Applicants

TDC:rb
(215) 656-3381